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Congo News Letter

Stanley Pool as seen from the Mission

Leopoldville Number

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LEOPOLDVILLE NUMBER

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Congo News Letter

LEOPOLDVILLE

"....in His pity He redeemed them." ISAIAH 63:9

As I've walked the sandy Congo streets
In this heart-of-Africa city,
I've been wooed closer and closer to Christ,
Nearer His heart of pity.

His compassionate, lovely eyes must weep
O'er this heart-of-Africa city.
He would gather these naked and hungry ones
Nearer His heart of pity.

He would receive them, save them, heal them
In this heart-of-Africa city,
If they'd love Him, believe Him and enter
Into His arms of pity.

JANET BOONE

AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION AT LEOPOLDVILLE

P. A. MacDiarmid

MOST new missionaries who, in recent years, have arrived at Léopoldville by train or plane have been rather amazed at this modern bustling city. A few perhaps know its history but most probably have not read the books that deal with its past. For these it might be well to quote some lines dealing with the inhabitants in Stanley's time. Sir Harry Johnston in his writings on "George Grenfell of the Congo" (Vol. 1) writes :

IN STANLEY'S TIME

"The Bateke people who inhabited the country around the south western shores of Stanley Pool (chiefly at two great congeries of villages, *Ntambo* or *Kintamo* and *Nshasa* or *Kinshasa*) were never well disposed towards the European. The well-known chief of Ntamo (Léopoldville) was Ngaliema, the capricious friend of Stanley. This individual, like Ibaka and other riverain Congo chiefs, began life as a slave to a Bateke chief, bought for one plate. He was astute in commerce and so enriched himself over the ivory trade.... But his people cared nothing for agriculture and hindered all the State's efforts at improving the local food supply. After several attempts at futile risings the remnants of the South Stanley Pool Bateke returned to the lands north of Stanley Pool, from which they had come."

Stanley called his station at Kintamo, Léopoldville, after King Léopold II of Belgium who was the directing head of the African Association, under which Stanley was employed. But Kinshasa continued to be the name for the eastern group of villages for many years after the railroad from Matadi was completed; it was a way-station before reaching the main station at Léopoldville. With the transfer of the Central Government from Boma to Kinshasa, and the rapid growth of business, the eastern section outdistanced the western portion and was known as Léopoldville I while Léopoldville-West became Léopoldville II.

The principal reason why the first Protestant missions were so anxious to reach Stanley Pool, was that they considered it the gateway to the vast interior. The Livingstone Inland Mission, which began its work in Congo in 1878, and after doing some years of hard pioneering bequeathed its stations to the American Baptists in 1884, had as its sponsors Rev. and Mrs. Grattan Guinness of London. Mrs. Guinness, in writing about the aims of the Mission said :

THE PIONEER MISSION

"The first word 'Livingstone' recalled an example, the second 'Inland' an aim. Our sphere was the interior, not the cataract region." The same aim was in the minds of those directing the affairs of the B.M.S. In the friendly rivalry existing between these two missions to reach the Pool the B.M.S. won. Messrs. Clark, Richards and Ingham of the L.I.M. went by the more difficult route of the North Bank, and on arriving where Brazzaville now stands and hearing of the ferocity of chief Ngaliema and his people they returned to their station at Bemba. When the L.I.M. missionaries finally reached the Pool by the South Bank they found the B.M.S. occupying a ridge near the Livingstone Rapids just below the present hill-top cemetery. After a few years there the B.M.S., foreseeing a greater future for Kinshasa, moved to their present site.

DR. SIMS

Although Dr. Sims sailed from England in 1882 with the definite plan outlined by the Guinnesses of opening a station at Stanley Pool, and then others on the Upper River, because of malarial fevers on the way to the pool and other hindrances it was not until 1883 that he reached Kintamo. On the way up he met Stanley at Manyanga and received from him a gift of land, about 8 acres, part of which is included in the present mission property at Léopoldville. Associated with Dr. Sims at the new station that first year were Mr. Banks and Mr. Pettersen. Others who labored there in the early years were: Mr. Billington who wrestled with the assembling of the 500 man-loads of the river-steamer "Henry Reed," Mr. Gleichman whose burial place behind the Sims

Memorial Church is marked with a slab, and a Mr. Camp.

But it is Dr. Sims who is chiefly remembered as the founder of the station. Remaining there for nearly twenty years, he began with native-style houses of mud-and-wattle, followed by adobe structures and then later by kiln-burned bricks. Believing that the Congo boys must learn by doing he taught them to make the brick, build the kiln, and when burned to lay the bricks in the walls. The chapel is built of bricks made in this way. It originally had a tile floor.

Although there was daily religious instruction it would seem as if no converts were baptized until 1892, nine years after the opening of the station. Dr. Sims, in his report for the year 1891 writes : "I have continued the lines of work of last year; viz., combined moral and manual instruction of the young people, and a daily religious service, taken alternately by me and Mr. Gleichman. During the year fully thirty young people professed conversion, and some were so worthy of baptism that we pressed it upon them, but family opposition and personal dread of falling away prevented them from taking that step."

But the report of the following year states : "Five young men have been baptized during the year and are already proving helpful in the mission work."

MPEYA

Stanley had made another gift to Dr. Sims — the gift of a lad he had rescued from slavery in the Stanley Falls area. Under Dr. Sims' instruction this man became quite a skilful gardener, and later was employed by Dr. Hope Morgan of the C.B.M. One time we visited his house in the native quarters and found he had wires running from the ground over the roof of his house, all strung with many insulators. We said; "Mpeya, you must be afraid of lightning." "No," he replied, "but I am afraid of them claps." Although he could repeat many passages from the Bible, yet for some reason or other that we never could discover, he never joined the church.

In those early years the transport of goods from Matadi by manload occupied much of the time of missionaries. In the

Annual Report of 1890 Dr. Sims mentions that 1600 carriers' loads for our Mission and for the C.B.M. passed through his hands during the year. The completion of the Matadi-Léopoldville railway in 1898 did away with the porterage of goods to Stanley Pool and beyond. Matadi became a bottleneck, as goods going to the Pool or farther up river had to be sent to the railway, while those for Mpalabala, Banza Manteke and Lukunga had to be sent by carriers. It was felt that Dr. Sims could best arrange these matters so he was sent from Léopoldville to Matadi at the beginning of the present century. At Matadi he did the transport work for some of the other missions as well as for our own. One of these, the Congo Balolo Mission, was asked to take over the transport work at Léopoldville, and to look after the religious and school work as well. This they did for a dozen years or so, but as time went on commercial companies undertook the transporting of mission supplies, so that the Congo Balolo Mission felt that their missionaries ought to devote their time to the Upper River area for which they felt responsibility. So early in the second decade of the twentieth Century they withdrew — Mr. Guyton and Mr. and Mrs. Wilkerson being the last of their missionaries at Léopoldville West.

A MISSION POST WITH NO MISSIONARIES

There followed about fifteen years when there was no resident missionary at this station, the oversight of the work being given to the staff at Sona Bata. The old houses built by Dr. Sims were used by missionaries passing through, or by those taking the month's medical course at the State Laboratory. There had accumulated much old, and sometimes decrepit, furniture during the years. The beds in the visitors' house were truly antiques. One missionary thought they had come down from the time of the Spanish Inquisition; another likened them to a relief map of Palestine, with Mount Hermon putting your neck out of joint, Mount Carmel pushing you over into the valley of the Jordan, and your feet dipping down into the Dead Sea.

Mr. and Mrs. Frederickson and Mr. and Mrs. Moody gave much time to the oversight of the work at Léopoldville during

those years, while urging the Conference and Board to place missionaries there. The conference tried to do so, designating Mr. and Mrs. Bain to this station. But the Home Board, finding difficulty in recruiting workers for the other stations vetoed the action of the Conference, and the Bains were sent to reinforce Mukimvika.

KIKWAKWA

During this long interval of supervision from Sona Bata there was one who stayed most of those years looking after the station and the work at Léopoldville and he deserves special mention. Moses Kikwakwa is not the most brilliant pastor in our Congo Mission but during his more than fifty years in the church, the major portion of which he was either a village teacher or pastor, he has a record that ought to put his name high in the Book of Life. Sent to Léopoldville to look after the property of the Mission and the church and school he was the kind of steward Paul wrote about : "*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*" The State recognized his long and faithful service by bestowing on him a medal and 250 francs in cash. The next day he came into our office and placed 50 francs of this on my desk. When asked what it was for he replied : "It is my offering to the Lord; if it had not been for the Lord Jesus, my Saviour, I never would have amounted to anything."

Thus Léopoldville station remained until 1928 when the Mission Conference, in consultation with a deputation from home, including Dr. Lerrigo, Home Secretary for the Congo, and Mrs. Goodman, President of the W.A.B.F.M.S., requested the Board to reopen Léopoldville as the headquarters of the Mission, transferring our school and church work at Matadi to the S.M.F. This Conference designated the Mission Treasurer, Mr. Erickson, and the newly-elected Mission Secretary, Mr. MacDiarmid, and Mrs. MacDiarmid to Léopoldville. However, it was June 1930 before Mr. Erickson could go and the MacDiarmids followed in August. In September of that year, as Mr. Erickson was due to take furlough, Miss Linda Erickson was sent by the Board to be Mission Treasurer. Book keeping may not be a romantic job but romance sometimes gets a foot in the doorway when the day's work is done.

A young man from Sedec's bookkeeping department found the road to Léo-West particularly attractive, and the moonlight nights among the palms did the rest. In due time Miss Erickson became Mrs. Watkins, and in this way the A.B.F.M.S. acquired a new Mission Treasurer.

VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

The first representative of the W.A.B.F.M.S. to be sent to Léopoldville was Miss Etelka Schaffer who had charge of the school from 1933 till 1935. In that same period, covering the furloughs of the MacDiarmids and the Watkins, the Moons and the Atkins helped in the church and school work. One new feature of the work had been added when Mrs. MacDiarmid had secured permission from the officer in charge of the Military Camp for our missionaries to hold services for the soldiers and their families. During the furlough of Mr. Watkins, Mr. Atkins acted as Mission Treasurer. He also roofed the Sims' Chapel with iron and built the combined school and church at the Christian Center.

Miss Schaffer having to leave on account of illness, Mr. and Mrs. Hall were sent to Léopoldville. Special mention should be made of the advancement made in singing under the training of the Halls. One of the outstanding events of this period was the General Conference of Protestant Missions held in 1938. In the panorama presented at Léo-West of the 60 years of Protestant work in Congo the chorus singing was very highly praised. The training of the large chorus-choir drawn from several missions, as well as the general arrangements for the conference and its success, were due to quite a large extent to the enthusiasm and labors of Mr. and Mrs. Hall.

And now I shall leave it to someone else to tell of the more recent developments in the Lord's work at Léopoldville; of other missionaries who have labored there; of Jean Lubikulu's fine influence, of the work among native women and children in which Mangunga has been followed by Malubelo, and concerning others who perhaps should receive mention. There are many pitfalls in a place like Léopoldville but we thank God for those who have remained true to the Master in the midst of these and for

those who have carried the Good News back to their tribes and fellow-villagers.

* * * *

Note — We had hoped to have an article by Mpeya about the beginnings of Léopoldville, etc., but he passed away a short time ago, before his article was finished.

LEOPOLDVILLE TODAY

EDWIN AND JANET BOONE

"What is your village, Mama?" She replies, "*Nsundi Lutete.*" "Where is your village, Tata?" He answers, "*Tadi.*" Others say their villages are *Kisala* or *Nselo*, *Bolobo*, *Mushi* or one of a hundred other widely scattered villages of Belgian Congo or French Congo. These are the people who make up Léopoldville.

The native city of Léopoldville West or Léopoldville II now numbers somewhere between twelve and fifteen thousand people. This is the part of this capital city for which the A.B.F.M.S. is responsible. For the spiritual welfare of this large number there are only three missions—Catholic, Salvation Army and our own. We serve our people in a bi-lingual church, primary school and dispensary.

ATTENDANCE

The past year we have tried to improve the records of our native church in order that we might be able to know all of the people for whom we are responsible and thus better reach them. For the most part the people have responded in coming to receive the new cards prepared for them. As they have come we have gathered information which is entered in a permanent card filing system. These cards are in triplicate and are filed alphabetically, by street address and according to their church card number. We

are also arranging a filing system of prospects and new born babies.

A record is kept of the attendance of all members, members under discipline, followers and school children. This record of attendance is recorded on a sheet of paper which shows at a glance the attendance at all the services of the church in a calendar year for each individual.

STEWARDSHIP

The field of stewardship is a much neglected one. We have not yet given the emphasis which we feel is much needed but we hope to advance. Each of the church family has his own package of envelopes for his weekly offerings. At the present time we have given out 900 packages. Already there is a noticeable increase in offerings with this new system.

CENSUS

The school program has kept us busy either in the office or in the class room from 7:30 until noon or 12 : 30 and again from two until 4:15. However, after these hours we have tried to do some church visiting. We have started to take a religious census of our section of the city. In this way we are finding many prospects. The field is white unto harvest.

FOLLOWERS

A large part of the work on a mission field is with the group of people called *Minlandi* or followers. These are people who have confessed Christ as Saviour but must attend instruction classes for at least six months before being examined for baptism. All during the calendar year of 1948 we had only one class for followers. Now we have eight classes in Léopoldville with more than 300 followers enrolled and three classes in a nearby village, Kinsuka, where there are 125 followers. Last year—1948—we baptized thirteen. Thus far in 1949 we have baptized thirty two and ten others have been approved for baptism on Christmas day. We received in the same period a year ago less than twenty by letters of transfer. This year we have received seventeen into church fellowship and we are awaiting letters for sixty others. Three were

added by restoration. This is only a beginning. We are praying for *and expecting* a revival.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday School is held at 8:30 each Sunday morning except the first Sunday of each month which is the day of the observance of our Lord's Supper. The Sunday worship services are held at 9:30 and 4 o'clock. Two prayer meetings are held weekly each Wednesday and Friday at 5:30. On these two prayer meeting days all of the school children enter the church at 4:15 immediately following the last class. The missionary brings a message each Wednesday and the pastor each Friday. These meetings are planned especially to reach our students and the response is better than it was when they were expected to attend the adult meeting at 5:30.

There is a meeting of the women of the church each Tuesday afternoon with a speaker--either a native woman or a missionary. Each Thursday afternoon the women attend their sewing class in the historic Sims Chapel.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

In November of 1948 we started preparations for the Crusade for Christ through Evangelism. Immediately following the visitation crusade which resulted in some forty decisions for Christ and His church, we had a week of revival meetings with Tshisunga Daniel, native evangelist, preaching daily. In these meetings 103 came forward.

During the short time that Miss Ruth Dickey was in Léo, she had a personal conference with each boy and girl in the upper classes of the school. Several prayed and accepted Christ and entered the followers' classes. She also did some good work in home visitation.

At Easter time we had our second series of pre-Easter meetings. These meetings were held daily at 5:30 with messages in Kikongo every other day and in Lingala the alternate days. Good Friday we had a three hour service starting at one o' clock. We used these hours because we had a similar service in the morning

at our village center Ngombe and it was impossible to return for the noon to 3 o'clock service as we know it at home. "The Seven Sayings of Christ from the Cross" were used with different speakers for each topic. Special music had a part in most of the periods. The church was filled and the meetings were a great blessing to those who attended.

When Dr. W. L. Muncy, Jr., Professor of Missions and Evangelism of Central Baptist Seminary, Kansas City, Kansas, was visiting our mission field we had the privilege of hearing his messages in two series of special meetings. At 3:30 daily for a week we had a student revival. An invitation was given after each message and thirty accepted Christ. Each one was dealt with personally the day after he had taken his stand for Christ. Again at 5:30 daily Dr. Muncy led our adults in a stewardship revival.

WORK AMONG OUTSIDERS

Each Thursday afternoon we go to the native police camp in our section where we have the privilege of leading in a service of worship for the policemen and their families. Entering camp and gaining the friendship of the people there has been an interesting experience.

The State Medical School in Léopoldville, a school which trains native nurses and doctors' assistants, includes in its curriculum two hours of religion each week. Protestant students attend their class and Catholics attend theirs. It has been our privilege to teach one hour each week during this school year.

DISPENSARY

A very important phase of our work is the year old dispensary which is in charge of our own native nurse—Mattie Marie. Through this we serve both the church and school. Perhaps the most interesting work is that of the weekly baby clinic. There are now 183 babies enrolled with a weekly attendance of over 100. Because of our limited facilities we only enroll babies whose parents are members of our church or followers. However, we try to guard against a mother coming only to clinic and not to meetings of the church.

VILLAGE WORK

At Ngombe we have a church with its own pastor. It serves a number of small villages. One of the missionaries from Léo goes out one Sunday each month for the communion service and at the same time to give general supervision to the work. Two village schools serve the children of the Ngombe church center.

Kinsuka is another village six kilometers from Léo. We go there each Sunday afternoon for a worship service. The few people who are church members are members of the Léopoldville church. This is a very wicked little village and most of the church members have been disciplined because they have gone back into the ways of the world. The Léopoldville church is paying the salary of a catechist who lives and works in Kinsuka. We hope to be able to open a school in this village in January.

SCHOOL AT LEO

The Léopoldville school numbers 362 students—boys and girls. We are trying to build a school which will meet government qualifications. Our great needs are three: (1) a new building, (2) a good teaching staff, and (3) a missionary staff sufficient to permit one couple to do the school work and another couple to do full time evangelistic work.

The Léopoldville of today is growing and so are its needs. Actually the work is only begun. We need more witnesses, native and white, in order to carry to these people the good news of our Christ and His Salvation. Pray for this city and its people. Christ wept over a city.

Thoughts for the New Year:

Jesus asks us to guard our beginnings.

The laborer will be called to account for his careful cultivation, and not for the abundance of his harvest.

A LOOK AT LEOPOLDVILLE

B. W. ARMSTRONG

SOME years ago I heard a lecture which was supposed to be uplifting and inspiring. I got one thing out of all that was said. According to the lecturer, if the whole world looks yellow, it is because the beholder's eye is jaundiced. After so many years of work on one of the bush stations, I find it difficult to see Léopoldville as anything other than a place to come, do as much shopping as the account permits, attend the meetings which were the main reason for coming here, and then depart for our place of work. Now we find ourselves located here, our work revolves around the typewriter and committee room, we build reports rather than buildings, we attend committee meetings rather than itinerate in the villages, and it is difficult to adjust our lives to the new routine. If my report of things seen here in Léopoldville seems dark, or green, or spotted, then you can know that it is just motes or beams in my own eyes.

As the seat of government, center of commerce, transportation, communications, banking, and storage, Léopoldville is a busy place. The rush hours fill the streets with the most modern cars, driven by men and women who are intent on going some place in a hurry, and it behooves one to be alert. The newspapers carry a daily column of accidents, all too many of which are fatal. The dispute between cyclists and chauffeurs for the right of way usually ends by the chauffeurs winning.

The Belgian National Radio station is a 50,000 watt, round-the-world transmitter with a well rounded program. The airport is a truly international place with planes from U.S.A., France, Portugal, Holland, South Africa, and Belgium flying regular schedules. The Colony is stitched together by a network of air lines. The new river steamers are powerful diesel driven affairs that are a very far cry from the old mission steamers that opened up river traffic so many years ago. I read that when the *General Olsen*, the newest passenger steamer, made its first trip up the river, more than seven hundred native canoes were overturned

by the wash of the propellers. No lives were lost, and the transport company paid for the canoes. Fifteen-ton trailer trucks operate regularly on the streets of the city, the docks are completely modern with hysters, huge electric cranes, railroads, trucks, and warehouses.

The city has grown away from our mission. We are right on the banks of Stanley Pool, just above the rapids and next door to the shipyards. The city has developed east of us so if it were not for the noisy shipyards, we should be left in a quiet backwater. Our view across Stanley Pool is inspiring and I need only lift my eyes to get this inspiration. When the heavy storms come across the Pool, the rain may blow right through the wall and in around every window and door on that side of the house. But most of the time we appreciate our location. It is a mile and a half out to our Christian Center in the native city. The work of the church and school and dispensary are developing but the need for more staff is great.

The native population is now about 135 thousand and still they come. It is when we have a look at the Congolese that itl comes to us that we are not so far from the back country after all. They have learned to do many things in the way of handling machines. New buildings are sprouting all over the city, and it is the Congolese who do the mason and carpenter work. They operate electric welders and railroad engines, and repair watches. But they still have the same spiritual needs as they did in the villages. When they talk with us just as friends, we realise how much they do not understand their present mode of life. They come to us with some of their burdens, and it is brought to us anew that heartaches are not lessened by larger pay checks.

Right in front of us stands historic old Sims chapel. Since the development of the Christian Center out in the native city, with a church accessible to the people, this little old church is not much used. We have the daily prayer service for the small number of folk who work here on the station, once a week the women come there to sew and for a devotional, once a year it is filled for the special Women's Day of Prayer. Otherwise the little church is a reminder to us of the work done by those who first came to

Congo as heralds of the Gospel. It speaks to us of useful service, sacrificial living (there is a grave stone just back of the church), and of the unfinished task in all the back districts as well as here in the city. The thousands of workers from the shipyard pass by every day, and the little church must remind them of something pure, holy, and spiritual in their drab lives. These men, many of them at least, would steal everything they can get their hands on: but we never have anything stolen from the chapel which always stands open. Pray for and with us that our lives, our work, our witness will always speak of the great open heart of God.

SOME OF MY EXPERIENCES AT LEOPOLDVILLE WEST

MOSES KIKWAKWA

I was among the first men to take the pastors course at Kimpese in 1910 to 1913. We were all from the lower Congo and spoke the same language. After finishing my schooling at Kimpese I served different village churches in the Sona Bata field.

In 1921 Tata Frederickson came to me one day and said, "We need a pastor to go to Léopoldville to take care of the church there and the mission property. There is no missionary living there and some one must go there to see that the church and place is cared for." "Ah, Tata! Do you mean that I should go up there where there are Bangala and Bakongo people together in the same village? They say some of the Bangalas eat people." After praying about it and talking it over with my wife it was decided that I should go alone and my wife come four months later.

As the train neared Léopoldville I began to be afraid that I would be arrested or get into trouble of one kind or another. The train only stopped for a short while at Léopoldville East and then continued to Léopoldville West, or Kintambo as it was then called. No one was there to meet me. I got off the train, took my things and walked to the mission where I soon found a house and plenty of work to do.

One day some policemen came with a gang of prisoners to cut palmnuts on the mission property. I told them they couldn't as this was mission property. The police arrested me and took me to the white man. He told me to come back at 2 o' clock. The natives told me I would be going to jail. I said, "That is all right with me if that is the will of God." At 2 o' clock I went back and stood around and waited, the white man asked, "What do you want ?" I said, "You told me to come back at two about those palmnuts." He answered, "Go home, I have nothing against you." God was good to me and answered my prayer.

There were only 22 church members when I got here. Kintambo, or Léopoldville West, was a very small town. But people started coming to the services from the nearby villages and even from Brazzaville on the French side of the Congo river, in their canoes.

We held our baptismal services in the Congo river right back of Sims chapel. Some one of the people would be on the look out for crocodiles all the time during the service.

I soon learned that the Bangala people were just as friendly and kind as were Bakongos. I also found that they too had heard the Good News and had learned to know and love God. We had difficulty at first to get the two different groups to take communion together. (In those days we had only ordinary water glasses to serve the communion in). It was taboo for one tribe to touch his lips to the glass that had been touched by one of another tribe, but as they learned to know each other better and grew in their knowledge of the love of God this fear passed away.

My wife came to join me after four months and she never left me to go back to her village the 12 years that we were in Léopoldville. (This is most unusual for a native woman. They are prone to go home and stay months at a time.)

I walked to Kinsuka, three miles away, to preach and to Ngombe, 10 miles away, to preach and give communion. Many people came from Kinshasa, (Léopoldville East) and Brazzaville to our communion services here at Kintambo.

In 1930 Mr. Henry Erickson and Mr. and Mrs. MacDiarmid moved to Léopoldville. Our hearts were filled with joy to have

them with us. We had been alone so long we were lonely for the the help and advice of our *mindele* (white man).

In August of 1931 the government decorated me with a medal for over 30 years of faithful service. I am very happy to have this medal, but I only wear it on very special occasions.

In September of 1933 we left Léopoldville to go back to the Sona Bata field. We had seen much of God's blessing, and many sad things had darkened our days, but now when we look back on the 12 years at Léopoldville we cherish them as some of our happiest memories. God is good to us and has always been. Praise His name.

TATA KIKWAKWA AND MAMA NLOMBA

(The above story was told to us in May of 1949 when we went out to visit Kikwakwa and his wife in their village of Kifwa. They are both well, though on in years, and busy in their village. Kikwakwa is still preaching the gospel on Sundays and also goes to different centers to give communion. L. Watkins)

NINETEEN YEARS AGO AND NOW.

LINDA WATKINS

WHEN I arrived in Léopoldville in September of 1930 I was so surprised to find a town with lights, running water and a few cars and taxis. I stayed two days in Léopoldville East to do some shopping etc. and then we went the five miles, over very bad mud roads with deep ruts, to our mission at Léopoldville West.

My first Sunday morning in Léopoldville the Sims chapel was filled with natives who had come to worship. At the communion service, conducted by Mr. MacDiarmid and Tata Kikwakwa, I was thrilled to think that we were all one family in Christ.

In the little Sunday School class that I later had on my back porch I had Nzanzadi Gustave as one of my first pupils. He walked the three miles from Mbinza, where his father was a chief. Since finishing school at Sona Bata he has been teaching here for several years and is now at Kimpese taking the advanced teachers' course.

On Sunday afternoons I went out with the MacDiarmids to Mbinza and other nearby villages to hold services. The little folding organ was a great attraction and all the children crowded around to hear and see.

Léopoldville West had very few white people besides the missionaries. There were several houses but they were all empty. Now the streets of both East and West are lined with residences of government and company people, and there are 1,350 white children in the schools here. It used to be that we stopped to look if a white child was seen on the street.

The road is now paved from Léopoldville East to Léopoldville West, and a great number of the streets in Léopoldville East. Cars, trucks, buses and taxis by the hundreds are seen on streets, owned by white and black.

Léopoldville West has grown from a small native town to nearly 10,000 and Léopoldville East has a native population of 125,000. There are industries of many kinds, a large textile plant, a blanket factory, companies making cement blocks and tiles, several printing companies, furniture factories, tannery, shoe factory, bakeries, laundries, brewery, and ship building, as well as the activities of the railroad and the river transport. Yes, civilization has come down on us fast. But where are all the Christians who have come here from their mission village schools and churches to seek wealth? Many have joined with our church and the British Baptist church or the Salvation Army, but many have been lost in the crowd, too intrigued with the lights and high life of the big city to think of God. "Oh, yes we worshipped in our village, but here——?" We praise God for those who are a testimony and have been true through the years such as Mbaki, who has been here for twenty years, and his fine wife and seven children. He is a fine example of a Christian layman.

There are many in the church who have grown up in Léopoldville and learned their first Sunday School lessons here, and many have been won for Christ after they came here.

* * * *

Luna Marguerite was born and raised in Léopoldville, but did not attend church until Tata David Nsanga our Lingala speak-

ing pastor talked with her time and again about the things of God. She says, "I started coming to the services and then I joined the seekers' class, and later was baptized and joined the church." She now has four lovely children who are learning the things of God from their Christian mother.

* * * *

Telese Mbuya says. "I was not attending any church but one day I walked past Sims Chapel and saw a group of people with their heads bowed in prayer. I wanted to enter but my mother refused to let me do so. When the church was built in the native village I was invited to the opening service by Mama and Tata Moon. It was a beautiful service and I decided right there to follow Christ. I joined the seekers' class, and was later baptized and joined the church." She is now a deaconess in the church and also a Bible Woman. She says, "In one of the homes I visited outside of Léopoldville I found a worried mother and a very sick baby. I prayed with the mother and for the baby. We all found joy and peace. When I was leaving the mother said, 'Here are some peanuts for the mama with the Words of Life. Please do not leave us.' 'I must go but I will come back.' I am very happy in the work of visiting the women."

* * * *

Lina Nkwakiadi says, "I accepted Christ in my village and was baptized and joined the church there. I came with my husband to Léopoldville with much fear in my heart. I did not like the big city with mixed tribes and different languages. My husband was a teacher for a few years, but then he left the teaching and went to work for a company. God took our little baby home to Himself and I was grief-stricken, but one day I was asked by Mama Watkins if I would do Bible women work and visit homes. I was afraid to try but after praying about it I decided to try and now I am happy to go from home to home and visit the sick and those who are indifferent and careless and do not attend regularly. God has made me very happy in His work."

MY GUEST BOOK

RHODA ARMSTRONG

DURING the many mission conferences that we have attended during our years in Congo, one of the most tense, if interesting, sessions is always that where missionaries are to be designated to their place of work. We have not been moved as often as some other missionaries, but we have worked in the lower Congo, in the Kwango, and now at the capital city, Léopoldville, which is unlike any of the other stations. We always used to express our willingness to go anywhere that the conference wanted to send us, and add softly "Except to Léopoldville." But it is at Léopoldville that we find ourselves now.

In spite of the fact that we shall never lose our love for work at the "bush stations" we find that there are real compensations for living in the big city, where our present work puts us less directly in touch with the native Congolese than was the case before. Not the least of these compensations is the speed with which we receive letters from our son, other family, and friends. Airmail service between America and Congo is excellent, and it seems wonderful to receive letters from home within a week after they are written, quite different from the days when we counted on three months. Some of the advantages that friends at home eagerly pointed out count much less—electricity, shopping center, modern conveniences. Of course we use them and appreciate them as long as we are living here anyway. But we were perfectly happy in our old mud house which we used for years at Kikongo; and while that particular house is gone long ago, under tropical storms and insects, we could be happy again under similar circumstances. It is not the material things that rank first when we count our blessings. What missionary is there who does not enjoy itinerating in the villages, although his housekeeping presents nothing but inconveniences during that time?

But there is one thing in which we are privileged in Léopoldville above those in any other place in Congo. Here are the crossroads, and there are more missionaries coming and going, or

staying for a period, than you would find elsewhere. When we first went to Kikongo, a good many years ago, it was a wild, primitive place. When we landed there, I was the only white woman, not merely on the mission station but in the district; and I did not see another white woman until the following year when we went to Banningville (our government post, 160 kilometers distant) where there were a few Belgian and Portuguese families. It is not so here. Last night I took out my guest book and looked through it. We have been back from furlough just over a year, but not all of that time has been spent here. Yet, during the months that we have been in Léopoldville, we have had the joy of entertaining in our home some hundreds of guests. Most of them came for a single meal, some came to spend a few days or weeks. All of them stand out as individuals in our memory. All of them have enriched our lives.

Among these friends we find, naturally, that the majority are missionaries, but there are also those who have come out from America or Europe on mission business, there are business men, government officials, educators, engineers, doctors of philosophy, doctors of medicine, soil conservationists, linguists, and just plain globe trotters. There are at least ten different nationalities represented (not counting the different tribes into which the Africans who have been here could be divided.) Is it any wonder that the horizon is extended, and that one's interests are broadened ?

Among the missionaries, we have had guests from sixteen different mission societies. There too, we find a variety of nationalities and of denominations too, but a great unity in love for our Lord and in love for the Africans whom we have come to serve that they might know that Lord and accept Him for their own. It is natural for us to talk about our work, exchange ideas, and learn something from each other. But even if mission work is the topic on which we dwell most often and with most interest, it does not monopolize the conversation around the dinner table. There is stimulating discussion on government (in many parts of the world), economics, sports (radio and news magazines keep those informed who are interested), books that have been read and can be recommended (or not recommended !) and even art, rang-

ing from the crude paintings sold at the door by untaught Congolese to the exhibition of the beautiful and costly work of a Portuguese silversmith which we had in Léopoldville recently. Missionaries do not have to go stale mentally just because they spend years at a time far from their own country.

The missionaries present much interest, just being themselves. There are the newcomers, some of whom had never before set foot on Congo soil when we met them at the airport. Their reactions awaken memories of our early surprises and thrills. There are first termers, hard working and zealous, who will grow in understanding and knowledge as the years go by, and this really becomes home to them. There are the second generation missionaries who are returning to their childhood home and love it. There are a few, we must admit, who seem to think that nobody has as much trouble as they, and that nobody's work is as important as theirs. There are those who have literally borne the heat and the burden of the day, who have had many disappointments and much trouble, but who have become mellow and wise and kind through it all. It is a benediction to have them in our home; and we pray that we may be helpful to others, as they have been helpful to us. For the tie that binds us together, men and women of diverse tongues and backgrounds, is the fellowship we have in the Spirit of Christ. As we sing a song of praise together, or kneel in prayer, we find that we are no longer host and guests, but brothers and sisters in the family of God who sent us here.

* * * *

We have just started a new guest book, and there is lots of room in it !

Thoughts for the New Year:

Abraham did not know where he was going, but he did know the One who was leading him.

Don't grumble about growing older. If you weren't as old as you are, you'd be dead.

A great many people spend their lifetime waiting for tomorrow, and tomorrow never comes.

IMPRESSIONS OF LEOPOLDVILLE

NINA URNER

"FRIENDLINESS" expresses my first impression of Congo Belge when disembarking from the "Fernside" at Matadi. It still remains after a short sojourn here at the A.B.F.M.S. in Léopoldville-Ouest.

Unpacking over, I went out to see the sights: standing beside historic Sims chapel, there lay before me a beautiful view up the Congo river and across Stanley Pool, Léopoldville the center of Belgian activities in the Colony. The city made no special impression with its government and commercial buildings creating a skyline similar to that of many American cities I have known; no unfamiliar sound was that resulting from operations at a nearby shipbuilding plant, only the patter of bare feet and the greetings from colonials and natives made me aware of being far away from the home land.

A letter had said "Léopoldville is a modern city" so the mud house with its thatch roof associated in the American mind with Africa was not expected. Léopoldville is modern beyond any preconceived ideas. I had anticipated seeing a few European dwellings in addition to those modern government and commercial buildings, but not those rows and rows of houses along the streets and avenues built in the latest modernist style. There is a friendly come-hither atmosphere about these homes designed for out-of-door living in the tropics, and beautifully landscaped with trees, shrubs and plants bright with blossoms and variegated foliage. The vegetable gardens are as much a part of the homelife of these colonials as the flower beds. Here vegetables may be seen growing under a built-up framework covered with palm leaves as a protection from the tropical sunshine.

The Congolese women fashion their costumes from prints designed in gay and sombre hues often using two prints in combination. As they pass along the ways these women are picturesque in their garments of many colors like the coat of Joseph pictured in our childish minds. A visit to one of the native open

markets was as much of a fashion and baby show as a food display, as the mothers have different styles in arranging their costumes and carrying babies. I have yet to hear a Congolese baby cry when being carried clinging to his mother's back and putting his legs around her waist like a little monkey. He looks at you with big wondering eyes and usually smiles. While I made no selection, there was a variety of foods—palm oil and nuts, dried beans, dried and smoked fish, shrimp, caterpillars, manioc pounded, and native food wrapped in leaves, with a few fresh vegetables here and there.

At first I marveled at so many dirt roadways in such a modern setting. Later, observing the imprint of bare feet in the dust, I reflected how much more comfortable than the hot concrete streets for walking. The automobile, the truck, the station wagon are all here, and paved avenues and boulevards are being extended for their accommodation in every direction. More popular is the bicycle, that is to be seen everywhere, ridden by children and adults, men and women, the native as often as or more so than the colonial. To park a bicycle appears to be a greater traffic problem than to park an automoble. It was with difficulty that I entered a store one morning because of the bicycles parked close to the door for lack of space. Standing once again looking over Stanley Pool, an airplane swept low spraying out two streams of DDT along the water's edge, and returned in a wider circle to cover a marshy island off shore. Other planes come and go with passengers and mail. Yes, I have found Léopoldville a most modern city.

The native city is here also. It is an interesting medium between the native village and the modern city, part native, part colonial, indicating the impress of the European way of living upon the Congolese who are courageously endeavoring to make a transition to a new way of life. Visits to chapels in the native city were inspirational and left the impression that the impact of a spiritual awakening was influencing the desire of the natives to put their feet upon higher ground in the way of Christian as well as European living.

Nothing is real work unless you would rather be doing something else.

A SMILING FACE

B. W. ARMSTRONG

THE occasion was the annual thanksgiving meeting at Sona Bata and smiles were a dime a dozen. In fact, one rather had to hunt for any other kind of face. There had been a goodly number baptized, others who had been living carelessly and in sin were restored to the fold, plans had been laid to cover the whole of the Sona Bata field with evangelistic meetings this year, and the plan was being carried out with enthusiasm. The offerings were far above those of last year. The thanksgiving meeting was one in deed as well as in name. A young Congolese pastor whose voice was strong enough to hold the big crowd preached the Sunday morning sermon and vividly illustrated the fact that we are all of one family. He told a Congolese fable of the rooster that continually crowed and as he crowed he said: "The crocodile is my brother."

The crocodile was not satisfied with this, since crocodiles sleep in the river and roosters sleep in the village. He therefore brought the affair to the attention of the chief who heard his story and called together the elders. They were unable to give a decision. When the wise men had failed, the sparrow humbly said that if the elders permitted, he would judge the case for them. He did so by starting in to name the birds: his own group, the guinea fowl, the pheasants, ducks, chickens. In each case he called attention to the fact that they are born from an egg. Then he switched to snakes: the boa, the viper, the python, the mamba, each one is born from an egg. Then he started in on alligators, lizards, and crocodiles, and the same thing was true: each one is born from an egg. "Therefore the rooster that always crows and says that the crocodile is his brother is right, they both are born from an egg." So all of us who by faith are born again by the Spirit, concluded the pastor, and who walk in newness of life are brothers.

Following the sermon the pastor read the list of special gifts. These came from villages, from individuals, from special groups. Amid much singing almost every one then went forward to make

his or her thanksgiving offering. Last year three churches participated in a union thanksgiving meeting; this year each of the churches had their own, yet the Sona Bata church alone gave an offering which was greater than the total of last year.

In the afternoon we went out to the leper camp which is a few miles from the station. There the camp pastor had arranged things nicely. The lepers were in the center, visitors in front and on one side, and the clean children of leprous parents on the other side. The children had prepared a special song. The little darktown strutter who led the singing was something special, a red comb in his tight kinky hair, his new school pants well up in place although the homemade suspenders had to have bowknots in them to make them short enough, his new school blouse was well down in back and well up in front exposing a band of black midriff, but the youngster knew his stuff. He waved his arms, got the count one, two, three, four, and away they went. One solo part was a high falsetto of la-la-la-las but fitted right in. The old visiting pastor who conducted the meeting thanked the children for singing and remarked that it is good to hear children singing praise to God, and not the old ribald dance songs. Then I was surprised when the pastor said that they would have the THANKSGIVING offering from the lepers, and all the visitors were invited to participate. The lepers grow food for sale, make small pieces of hand work if they are able, and possibly get some help from relatives. But I believe that every leper there marched up and made an offering. Five patients from the Salvation Army group with their white robes must have felt right at home with the singing, clapping, and marching, all five of them had something to give. It was during this procession that one smiling face stood out from the crowd. As the lepers walked up to the table where the offerings were placed, a man came along with two pieces of money in his hands, one of which he dropped into the pan and the other he gave to his child who was sitting right in front of me, among the clean children. One half of his face was all smile, the other half can no longer register either happiness nor grief, being so distorted and eaten by leprosy. But underneath the disfigured face one knew that the smile was there. The father gave the money

to the child who promptly took his place in the line and in due time the coin was dropped into the pan.

That centered my attention on others among the lepers, and I noticed the woman who had only bandaged stumps in place of hands; but she was in line with her offering tucked into a fold of the bandage. She held her arms over the pan and another flipped the coin out from under the bandage and into the pan. A man with one foot and one stump came along with the others and made his offering. Men, women, and children, all singing a song of praise to God, made their offering. With much shame I had to borrow from one of my fellow missionaries in order to make an offering. At the time a passage of Scripture came to mind and has stayed with me, "What doth the Lord require of thee ?"

What doth the Lord require of thee ? What does He require of a small black boy with a red comb, bare midriff, perfect timing, and Elmer Hall gestures ? What does He require of a leprous father with a twisted face, love in his heart for his son, and a deep flowing smile ? What does He require of two consecrated doctors, one from America and one from Britain, as they apply modern medical science plus a vital faith in God, to the healing of lepers ? What does He require of a Congolese teacher and a nurse giving full time service to the leper camp for very small pay ? What does He require of you or of me ?

Prayer of Mbaki during morning chapel at Leopoldville West:

"Jesus, we are amazed that the Jews could look at you and not be convicted—the thorns, the beating, the nails, the spear, the blood. But we know they did not look with their hearts, their look was an empty look of the eyes. Help us Lord to look to you with our hearts and love you and live for you. Help those too who know you not to look at you with their hearts that they may come to love you. This we pray in your name, Jesus, our Chief, who died on the cross for our sins."

NEWS ITEMS

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Hall arrived, with their son Robert, just before the opening of school at Kimpese. Within a few days they were carrying on a full teaching schedule in our school for pastors and teachers. We extend a hearty welcome to these old friends and colleagues.

Miss Nina Urner of Washington, D. C. is visiting our Congo mission. She is a life-long friend of foreign missions and we are happy that she has this opportunity of seeing something of the work in which she has so long been interested.

We are looking forward to a meeting of the mission evangelistic committee here in Leopoldville in January. The missionaries in charge of the church work on each station will attend. Working together with the denomination at home, we shall carry on a crusade for Stewardship along with the follow-up on the crusade for Christ through Evangelism.

We are anticipating a visit from our Home Secretary, Mr. Marlin D. Farnum, starting in February 1950. We hope that he will be able to stay with us for a period of four months. This will be his first visit to Congo and we are certain that he will come to love Congo and the Congolese even as we do.

The mission compound in the native city at Leopoldville West is to have a new fence. This has long been needed but is costly. The local church will bear a considerable part of the expense. It will be a great relief to have the class rooms made goat proof.

This should be no news, but all of us—in Leopoldville and the whole mission—wish you a happy and blessed New Year.

Prayer is so simple
It is like quietly opening a door
There in the stillness
To listen to His voice;
Perhaps to petition,
Or only to listen.
It matters not.
Just to be there,
In His presence
Is prayer.

THE FAITHFUL PASTOR

He held the Lamp, each Sabbath day,
So low that none could miss the way,
And yet so high to bring in sight
That picture fair, of Christ the Light,
That gazing up, the Lamp between,
The hand that held it was not seen.

He held the Pitcher, stooping low,
To lips of little ones below;
Then raised it to the weary saint,
And bade him drink when sick and faint,
They drank, the Pitcher thus between,
The hand that held it was not seen.

He blew the Trumpet, soft and clear,
That trembling sinners need not fear,
And then with louder note and bold,
To storm the walls of Satan's hold,
The Trumpet coming thus between,
The hand that held it was not seen.

But when our Captain says, "Well done,
Thou good and faithful servant, come
Lay down the Pitcher and the Lamp,
Lay down the Trumpet, leave the camp,"
Thy weary hands will then be seen
Clasped in His pierced ones, naught between.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

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with P. O. addresses*

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